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challenge



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A VOTE FOR BUSH OR KERRY IS A VOTE FOR



WAR

Despite the bosses' boast that new voters are registering in record numbers, far more people will stay home on Election Day rather than vote for either Bush or Kerry. Once again, a U.S. president will take office with about 26% of the eligible vote.

Voting increases with age and wealth. Young workers and unemployed youth in general vote in far fewer numbers than older, affluent people.

Politically, this cynicism used to work for the rulers, who figured that although they might prefer a larger turnout at the polls, passive cynicism was better than mass militancy against the system. However, with U.S. imperialism's long-range plans for a police state and ever-widening wars, this cynicism is beginning to turn into its opposite. The bosses view a large voter turnout as an endorsement of their system and an important step toward mobilizing the working class to fight, bleed and sacrifice for U.S. imperialism.

So far, they've fallen far short of this goal. Worse yet for their class is the sign of growing rebelliousness

ing military journalist, writes (Washington Post, 10/16) that it's instead "the latest indication of troubled morale in some National Guard Reserve Units called up for Iraq duty." He refers to a September lockdown of "several hundred" National Guard soldiers in the Fort Dix, N.J. barracks, after 13 members had gone AWOL and after several instances of "brawling."

The level of political consciousness here is still low (in the first case, demanding better protection to fight the bosses' oil war and in the second, leaving camp to visit families), but that's to be expected. Communist consciousness doesn't grow on trees and the presence of the Progressive Labor Party among workers and soldiers is necessary for them to learn the need for opposing the brass and fighting to smash the profit system.

However, these signs of disobedience in the military, along with some strikes (like the recent one by San Francisco hotel workers) show that the class struggle continues even in periods of relative passivity. Regard-

**The economic screws will tighten on the working class.
Growing numbers of workers will be forced into the
military, either by unemployment or by the draft.**

within the U.S. military. On October 13, 19 soldiers from the 343rd Quartermaster Company failed to report for a planned fuel convoy from Tallil Air Base across central Iraq to Taji, north of Baghdad. They were protesting the roadworthiness of their trucks and the lack of overhead helicopter protection.

The military brass has portrayed this as an "isolated incident," but facts belie this. Thomas Ricks, a lead-

less of the election outcome, PLP will have opportunities to grow. The Iraq war will continue. More U.S. troops will be called up. Conflict between U.S. bosses and their rivals will sharpen, as the scramble to control Persian Gulf oil intensifies. The economic screws will tighten on the working class. Growing numbers

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Vietnam Syndrome Erupting Once Again Among GI's in Iraq?

The military is showing the political strains from the The recent refusal by a unit to carry out a "suicide mission," while not yet the kind of mass rebellion that undermined the military in Vietnam, U.S. rulers are finding that overcoming the "Vietnam Syndrome" is easier said than done.

The attacks on Iraqi civilians are undercutting soldiers' morale. Internally there's a trend towards more anti-war sentiment among GI's. There are signs they're being alienated from the war's political goals. Retention and recruitment are also becoming problems.

In interviews with a growing number of anti-war soldiers, the Christian Science Monitor (9/21) described how "Fahrenheit 9-11" is becoming a must-see movie among GIs. The article details the political fallout from committing Vietnam-like atrocities:

"We shouldn't be here," said one marine infantryman bluntly. "There was no reason for invading this country in the first place. We just came and angered

From Wall Street Journal, 10/20

**'Army's Recruiters Missed Target
for Enlistees in Latest Month:
Reserves Fall 45% Short of Goal,
While Gap is 30% in Regular Force
Sign-ups'**

people and killed a lot of innocent people," said the marine, who has seen regular combat in Ramadi. "I don't enjoy killing women and children, it's not my thing."

Michael Moore is also publishing a book of letters from soldiers in Iraq. One says:

"In the few short months my unit has been in Iraq, we have already lost one man and have had many injured (including me) in combat operations. And for what?... [On] May 10,...I and 12 other men were attacked in a well executed ambush in southeast Baghdad. We were attacked with small arms fire, a rocket propelled grenade, and two well placed roadside bombs....riddl[ing] my friends with shrapnel, almost killing them...."

"The government is calling up more and more troops from the reserves. For what? Man, there is a huge f—g scam going on here! There are civilian contractors crawling all over this country (making \$15,000 a month).

"We are spending money out the a— for this s—t, and very few of the projects are going to the Iraqi people. Someone's back is getting scratched here, and it ain't the Iraqis! I just hope I come home alive."

A poem on Army latrine walls in Iraq says much about GI sentiment:

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EDITORIAL

DEMOPUBLICANS: THE WAR PARTIES

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of workers will be forced into the military, either by unemployment or by the draft.

If Bush wins, he will have to address the Liberal Establishment's criticism of his "incompetence." The liberals blame him for squandering the opportunity after 9/11 to mobilize the country for war and a police state by asking workers for "any shared sacrifice." The liberals also berate Bush for not "providing enough troops to secure Iraq." (New York Times 10/17 editorial endorsing Kerry) If Kerry wins, he will try to justify the liberal bosses' faith in him by moving ruthlessly to reverse the military fiasco in Iraq and to increase the efficiency of the "homeland" police state.

Either way, the working class has no stake in this outcome. Grasping at poisonous straws (Kerry over Bush) and cynicism (not voting) won't solve workers' problems. We need communism, nothing less. To make this long-range goal a reality, we must build PLP now. Recognizing and acting upon the opportunities that exist here and now can expand those of the future. The ball is in our court! ☸

The Few, The Proud, the Anti-war Marines

The potential for rebellion in the U.S. military extends beyond the National Guard, proving that the "Vietnam Syndrome" and the rulers' fear of it are far from dead. During the Vietnam War, thousands of U.S. soldiers and sailors participated in a spontaneous movement called "fragging," which involved shooting or otherwise attacking their officers. Over half a million deserted or refused to fight. Coupled with mass domestic protest against the war, the "Vietnam Syndrome" led the bosses to abandon military conscription in favor of the present economic draft.

A Washington Post article (10/10), based on interviews with a dozen U.S. Marines in Iraq's southern province of Babil, exposes the low morale in the supposedly most elite and hardened branch of the military. One Marine said, "The most dangerous opinion in the world is the opinion of a U.S. serviceman." Another added, "We're basically proving out that the [Bush] government is wrong. We're catching them in a lie." A third, who had enlisted out of misguided patriotism after 9/11, said after two months in Iraq, "Sometimes I see no reason why we're here." All the Marines interviewed recognized that the Iraqi population hates the U.S. military.

When asked if he feared punishment for speaking out in the press, one said sarcastically, "We don't give a crap. What are they going to do, send us to Iraq?"

Two weeks earlier, Farnaz Fassihi, a Wall Street Journal reporter stationed in Baghdad, sent an e-mail to friends lambasting Bush's Iraq policy. The e-mail is now all over the Internet. Fassihi calls Iraq a "disaster," a "foreign policy failure bound to haunt the United States for decades to come" (www.poynter.org/forum?id=misc).

If the liberal press is now quoting Marines, who are supposed to be the system's "few, proud" trained killers, and a reporter from capitalism's most unabashed print apologist, to embarrass Bush, there's a reason, and it's linked to the November 2 election.

We must draw a different conclusion. Rebellion in the military and Bush's bungled Iraq policy should induce us to organize for communism, not to vote for Kerry. Bush is indeed a monster, but Kerry will prove no less so. They are merely products of a monstrous society. That's the monkey we need to get off our backs. ☸

Vietnam Syndrome?

continued from front page

*"There once was a man named Saddam,
We thought had a nuclear bomb,
We started a war, few nations were for,
And now it's our own Vietnam."*

Commanders are worried that their troops will lose confidence. In several units, soldiers upon arriving in Iraq are being told to forget whatever they heard about being "liberators." The commanders are telling them, "This war is about oil," and they shouldn't trust any Iraqis.

Morale is also being hurt by retention and recruitment problems. Soldiers' unwillingness to re-enlist has produced a "stop-loss" policy in which soldiers in specialty areas are barred from leaving when their enlistments are over. There are also reports of soldiers who do not re-enlist being sent on additional tours to Iraq.

All this is shrinking enlistments of black youth. The Wall Street Journal (10/7) reported that "blacks attracted to the force numbered 12,103, or 15.6% of the total enlistment pool, in the year ended Sept. 30, down from a peak of 16,995, or 21% of recruits, in fiscal 2002....The drop in the share of black recruits roughly corresponds

with the mass movement of troops to the Middle East and the outbreak of the Iraq war."

For the first time in several years the National Guard did not meet its recruitment goal. The Army had to "early-enlist" 17% of next year's recruits in order to meet this year's goal.

Morale is unlikely to improve any time soon, and will probably worsen. The U.S. is losing control of large areas of the country and is responding by increased killing of Iraqi civilians. Whatever they tell people at home, the truth is less hidden from the troops.

Now the ruling class is using the Kerry campaign as the main outlet to control the morale problems. The Democrats and the military are organizing to get soldiers to vote.

Ultimately, the draft is staring at the military like the proverbial 800-pound gorilla in the room. With morale dropping in the all-volunteer military in the face of set-backs in Iraq, with U.S., casualties approaching 1,100 dead and 28,000 wounded, one can see why the Army brass is terrified that a draft that forces youth into the military could be their only way of filling their thinning ranks.

HEALTH ALERT! PROFIT SYSTEM KILLS

The profit system trumps workers' health once again. Tens of millions of people will be without the influenza vaccine — especially the most vulnerable, seniors and children — entering the winter flu season. Complains the New York Times in a lead editorial (10/20): "It is almost unbelievable...that the world's most medically advanced nation should suddenly find nearly half of its expected supply of influenza vaccine wiped out by...problems at a single plant in England."

Unbelievable? Not quite. "The main problem," says the Times, "is that influenza vaccine needs to be reformulated every year, and companies suffer huge losses if they overestimate the amount that will be needed" since they must destroy millions of doses. The key words here are "companies" and "huge losses." Of course, the Times won't conclude that production of a health necessity shouldn't depend upon the need for corporate profit, the foundation stone of capitalism.

In a communist society, where workers' health comes first, uncontaminated by bosses and their profit system, any risk of "overestimation" would simply be part of

the necessity to protect the population against disease. But under capitalism, corporations have to be "protected" against "huge losses." Inadvertently proving that the profit system is at the root of the problem is the Times' discovery of a "shocking reality": "panicky patients lining up for flu shots that are not available" find "price gougers trying to profit from their misery." Is there a more perfect description of capitalism in all its glory?

As far as "the world's most medically advanced nation" is concerned, the Times says the U.S. "FDA [Food & Drug Administration] was asleep at the switch." It made "no great effort to stay on top of what the British were doing." It seems "American health officials had no clue that almost half of the nation's flu vaccine supply was about to be impounded" because British regulators were suspending the license of the California-based Chiron company for "failure to comply with good manufacturing processes" at its Liverpool plant.

If this is an example of the "world's most advanced nation," all the more reason to destroy capitalism with communist revolution. ☸

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

☸PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.

☸Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

☸Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

☸Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

☸Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

☸Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☸Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

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MONOPOLY CAPITALISM IS NO GAME

I was assigned to teach high school Economics this semester. The official curriculum refers to market forces as if they're laws of nature, like wind or rain. It never discusses the term capitalism or how this economic system really operates. I wanted my students to experience the system's harsh reality.

My solution: play Monopoly. I set up four games for the 34 students in each classroom, and changed some rules to make the game closer to the real world. First, I assigned one student to be the banker. This person began the game with all the cash. The class concluded that the only way to begin life that way would be to inherit wealth. The banker then distributed an equal amount of money and three pieces of property to each player. Since some properties are much more valuable than others, a few players began with an advantage. After a few throws of the dice, this inequality increased.

All four games were played simultaneously. Nobody was allowed to leave the game when their funds got low. Instead, when they faced bankruptcy, they had to choose between borrowing from the banker or negotiating a merger with another player, forming a larger "corporation" in order to survive. "Miss, when is this game going to end?" asked one exasperated student.

"When you die or change the system," I replied.

As the games progressed, the students became increasingly hostile and mistrustful of one another. They had started

friendly. Now they trusted nobody. They were learning that capitalism and the greed driving it are not "human nature," but are capitalist laws that propel people into conflict. The students grew louder and louder, now yelling at each other. One girl said, "I have such a headache, please let me leave the game!"

A few students began to cheat. Today one student, a wealthy capitalist, was tricked by two small players who are close to bankruptcy. He was so furious he nearly stormed out of the room. Other students kept reminding him that it was just a game!

Between rounds, I conducted class lessons. One set detailed the actual distri-

"The lessons about the capitalist and working classes upset the students because, instead of the usual dry definitions teachers chalk on the board, participation in the game made it all very real for them."

bution of wealth in the U.S., and its extreme concentration in the hands of a few capitalists. We learned that the country's wealthiest 400 families control more wealth than one billion people in India. This really upset them. Two girls reported telling their parents, who then became as upset as their children. "You're destroying our dreams, Miss," one accused me.

We also learned about the working class, that we're all workers, and that ideas about upper, middle and "lower" class are false. Divisions within the working class are emphasized to distract and divide us. This, too, provoked heated discussions. One girl refused to talk, explaining that "all we do is talk about communism." But so far I had talked about only one economic system: CAPITALISM.

I was amazed at the response to this game. The lessons about the capitalist and working classes upset the students because, instead of the usual dry definitions teachers chalk on the board, participation in the game made it all very real for them.



in another game! What a breakthrough. I explained that of course they could go global, because that made them INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISTS. The rich owners were delighted with their new markets, but the players being invaded became very upset.

As we enter the game's final stage, some companies have gone bankrupt due to heavy debt and fierce competition. As the small players lose all their assets, they are still not allowed to leave the game, any more than we can leave the economy in which we live. They are left with nothing to do but sell their labor power. They are becoming the working class. I can't wait to see how they behave when most are workers and only a few remain as capitalists.

The final lesson will be the role of the government in maintaining the ruling class in power. I can't wait to see how it ends. Maybe they'll propose a revolution. ☺

TOYS 'R WAR

The worldwide toy industry is basically controlled by two mega-corporations, which have either swallowed or eliminated the competition: Mattel (Barbie, Fisher-Price, Scrabble, etc.); and the smaller Hasbro, controlled by the Hassenfeld brothers.

Hasbro took off in the 60s with the militaristic GI Joe toy. Later it took control of Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Playschool, Pictionary, Cluedo, Atari, Teletubbies, Pokemon, Star Wars and many electronic games. It also owns many candy brands.

Both corporations increased their profits by closing many of their manufacturing plants in the U.S. and Europe, and moving them to low-wages areas like China. In 2002, Mattel closed its Kentucky plant and moved it to Asia where it super-exploits some 39,000 workers. Hasbro only employs 10,000 workers directly because it uses mainly subcontractors who pay even lower wages.

But beyond merely toys and super-exploitation of workers, these toy companies are linked directly to the war machine. Paul Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld's second in command and one of the "Neo-Con" brains behind the Iraqi fiasco, was a member of Hasbro's Board of Directors before joining the Bush administration.

Another top member of Hasbro's Board is Marie-Josée Kravis, also linked to the directors of Ford, Canadian Imperial Bank, Vivendi Universal, Seagram and Hollinger (which runs newspapers in Britain and Israel

and whose owner was recently accused of corruption). Kravis is on the Council on Foreign Relations — the top policy-maker think-tank of the Eastern Establishment, the leading gang within the U.S. ruling class — where she's listed as an "expert" on the international economy, public policy and strategy. Bush, Sr., named her as a counselor to the Dept. of Energy. She's also a director of the conservative Hudson Institute. Her husband owns KKR (which runs Safeway, Duracell, Nabisco Union Texas Petroleum, etc.). He was number 35 on Forbes' list of top U.S. billionaires.

These and other bosses controlling the toy companies are also bound to make more bucks out of the Pentagon's plan to use video games to train soldiers and future soldiers in becoming cannon fodder for the war machine.

In essence, the U.S. economy is now more than ever a military-industrial complex serving imperialist war.

(Information from an article by Michel Collon in *Rebellion.org*) ☺



Boston Teachers Support Haitian Workers

BOSTON, Oct. 15 — On October 13, the Boston Teachers' Union passed the following "Haitian Flood Relief Resolution":

Whereas, over 3,000 people have died in the floods in Haiti in the last several weeks;

Whereas, U.S. troops have this year entered Haiti to support a new government;

Whereas, a major health disaster is in the making in Haiti due to lack of basic sanitation and fresh water in the flooded areas;

Whereas, the current Haitian government has not proved itself trustworthy to accept funds;

And, whereas, the Haitian workers organization, Bataye Ouvriye ("workers' struggle") has shown itself to be dedicated to workers' rights and interests in Haiti, recently winning a hard-fought

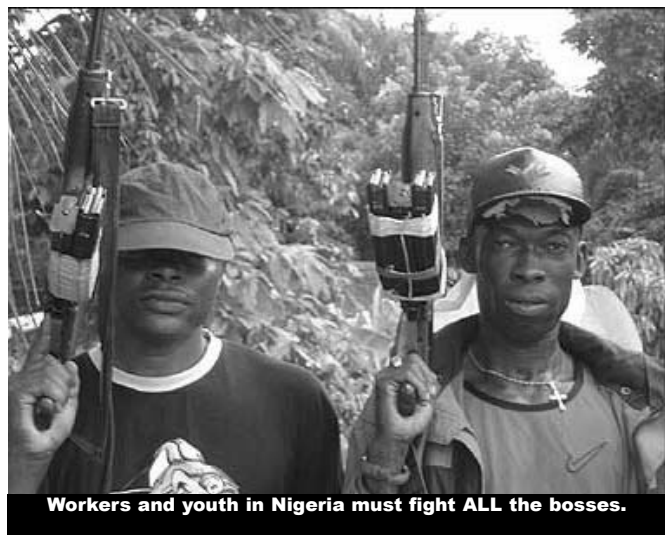
action against clothing maker Grupo-M which manufactures portions of Levi-Strauss clothing;

Therefore, we, the Boston Teachers Union, will as soon as possible contribute...to Haitian Flood Relief, \$500...and send it to Bataye Ouvriye for distribution to reputable local flood relief organizations.

(<http://www.batayouvriye.org> ; Bataye Ouvriye, BP 13326, Delmas, Haiti, W.I.)

Opposition came from the union treasurer, who said "it might be a precedent," and from a teacher who wanted "to keep the money in the country." ☺

'Sit-at-home' Tactic No Way to Win Nigeria General Strike



Workers and youth in Nigeria must fight ALL the bosses.

After four days, Nigeria's trade union leadership called off the general strike begun on Oct. 11. But the unions warned they'll call an indefinite stoppage in two weeks if the government fails to lower gasoline prices. The strike shut banks, businesses, shops and public services. Nigeria's oil industry was unaffected but "analysts say further stoppages could disrupt production in Africa's biggest oil exporter." (BBC News)

Owei Lakemfa, spokesman for the

Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) told the BBC, "The strike is officially suspended and we will meet within the next two weeks to decide what action to take."

The working class of Nigeria, Africa's most populated country, is fed up with poverty and government corruption. Seventy percent of Nigeria's 130 million people live below the poverty level. Life expectancy is only 50 years. To top it off, fuel costs have been rising since President Olusegun Obasanjo deregulated the sector a year ago and removed government subsidies. A committee, including government officials and union representatives, has been formed to discuss ways of easing the impact of the 25% gasoline price increase.

The government reacted against the strikers with heavy hand. Union leaders were arrested. The police killed workers

in the Kaduna region. In many other areas, the cops and armed gangs protected by the police brutally attacked strikers.

Nigeria is Africa's largest oil producer. This strike was one of the reasons oil prices topped \$50 a barrel in the world market, even though the oil industry itself was not struck. But other problems face Nigeria's oil producers. In the Delta region, where Shell and other international oil companies operate, is one of the country's poorest areas, and sabotage against oil pipelines is common. There are at least two armed groups fighting the army and the oil companies. Last June Shell admitted that for years it paid millions in bribes to local authorities. The London Independent said Halliburton grabbed a \$12 billion contract to build a gas terminal in Bonny Island after paying \$132 million in "unjustified commissions." Current President Obasanjo is reputed to have millions in secret bank accounts.

Totalfina (the French-Belgian oil giant) used to control Nigerian oil, but when former dictator Sani Abacha died in 1999, it lost its top dog influence there. Many now believe that Totalfina

has used its traditional dirty tricks methods to support the armed groups sabotaging Shell.

The strike's main problem was the NLC leadership. It called for a "sit-at-home" strike instead of mobilizing marches, picket lines and mass rallies. Even though the NLC leadership opposes President Obasanjo — who is also losing support among members of his own party and sections of the bourgeoisie — the NLC's reformist and pro-capitalist outlook makes it fear the power of the working class mobilized in the streets and at factories. Masses of workers in action can see their own power and can discuss tactics and other methods of struggle.

All this calls for the most advanced and militant workers in Nigeria to realize that only through building a revolutionary communist movement can they turn these struggles into schools for revolution. As the struggles grow and sharpen here, this is the most important victory workers can achieve in Nigeria and throughout Africa. ☸

50,000 March vs. Germany's Worst Social Welfare Cuts Since Nazis

BERLIN, Oct. 2 — Fifty thousands workers and their allies protested today against the Hartz IV law, which will cut social welfare programs. Their march follows a series of Monday demonstrations in 250 cities and towns, involving hundreds of thousands, to oppose the most drastic cuts since the Nazi era. On Sept. 20, the police brutally attacked 15,000 protesters. Workers also faced a vicious campaign from the bosses' media, which has called people from the former GDR (East Germany) "ingrate" for turning against their "saviors," the rulers of West Germany.

Those workers have gotten a real taste of what being "saved" by capitalism means. Fifteen years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, all the benefits they had under the socialist-state capitalist GDR have been ripped away. Industries were either swallowed by West German capitalists or dismantled. Unemployment — very low in the former GDR — is now rampant. In fact, many now view the GDR as the "good old days."

But the workers' anger lacks real communist leadership. The former East Germany CP (now called the Party of Democratic Socialism) made some gains in recent local elections, as did some neo-Nazi parties. So open fascists and fake leftists are trying to take advantage of the workers' anger.

The Oct. 2 march itself reflected this contradiction. While the organizers expected 100,000 marchers, only 50,000 took part because Germany's leading unions openly sabotaged it. The Schröder coalition government (the Social-Democratic and Green Parties) feels the lower number of marchers allows it to make the cuts. But the anger is growing. Recent mass strikes by DaimlerBenz workers against layoffs — affecting the entire auto industry — indicate that workers throughout Germany are fed up with paying for the German bosses' drive to increase their profits and compete with their imperialist rivals.

The situation here again exposes capitalism as a dead-end for all workers. These workers need a real communist society based on workers' power, not a socialist/state capitalist GDR. Building the leadership to make that possible is the main lesson workers can learn from these struggles. ☸

Red-led Transit Local Conference Spreads Political Consciousness

WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 16 — Today, rank-and-file members of Local 689, Amalgamated Transit Union, attended a day-long educational conference on the theme, "What Causes Change? — Without Struggle, There Can Be No Progress." Joining the transit union members were workers from a public sector union, the Baltimore teachers union, students from Howard University, activists in the struggle against police brutality in the local area, and public health workers from the Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association.

The Local's president, a PLP'er, initiated this conference to strengthen the political consciousness of the union's younger workers and to prepare them to become more effective grassroots organizers for the struggle against management and the ruling class as a whole. A second objective was demonstrating in practice to many other activists on campuses and in the community the primary role of the working class in the broad struggle against capitalism. The conference clearly made progress in achieving these objectives, laying the basis for expanding the circle of informed, active workers who could provide increasingly revolutionary leadership in this critical industrial union.

Four presentations included: the economy and racism; health care and racial disparities; the war in Iraq and the Patriot Act at home; and women's

rights both on the job and in the home. Speakers described the severe economic crunch awaiting workers' health care and pensions amid a permanent war economy as the U.S. ruling class struggles to maintain its domination of the world's oil supplies and economies. One Metro worker reviewed women's struggles to break into better-paying, non-traditional jobs like rail mechanic. She jokingly asked, "After all, how far could a secretary go? End up with a bigger typewriter?"

Round-table discussions followed the presentations. Leaders at each table ensured that every worker could participate fully with his/her ideas. Afterwards, many Metro workers were enthusiastic about continuing the political struggle begun at the conference.

The main immediate issue for Metro's current contract negotiation is reducing racist wage progression — the number of years required to reach top rate — in order to unify senior and junior workers. Those at the conference will be among the key leaders of this anti-racist struggle, which in turn will lay the foundation for recruitment to PLP as workers engage in sharpening class struggle.

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PLP Brings Red Ideas To Workers' March in DC

Members of Progressive Labor Party were among the few thousand workers from East Coast unions who participated in today's Million Worker March. Our goal was to bring revolutionary communist ideas to this gathering of workers, students and anti-war activists who had come to protest the war in Iraq and attacks on the living standard of U.S. workers. The enthusiasm of our young members was evident when they joked, "Is that all you're giving us?" as we divided our literature at 5:30 A.M.

Some of those who took part in the March thought more workers would attend. One reason why there weren't was the attitude of one leader of AFSCME's NYC District Council 37. Although 40 seats in the four buses rented for this 120,000-member union remained empty, she carefully screened the 160 riders to make sure only AFSCME members would get on.

We distributed thousands of CHALLENGES; "Don't Vote: Revolt!" pamphlets; "It's not just Bush, Its Capitalism" buttons; and leaflets. It was critical that we brought revolutionary communist ideas to the activists at the march, since the speakers from the platform, while strongly anti-Bush, rarely criticized Kerry and advocated only reforms of the system. But we know that the 22 reforms they proposed can never be won under capitalism, especially as it faces a permanent war economy. Elections only allow the working class to pick their poison; they never give us a cure.

Not far from the rally site, hotel workers were on the

verge of striking. After about three hours, about 250 students marched through the streets in support of these workers. Our participation in that march brought militancy and class analysis via chants. Initially the chants were exclusively about the hotel workers' struggle, not linking it to layoffs, cutbacks and the war in Iraq. Our chant, "Power to the working class! Kick the bosses in the ass!" spread like wildfire throughout this march.

We received heartfelt thanks from many people who got our leaflet calling for support of the mutineers in Iraq who had refused to carry out orders for what they called a "suicide mission." We had many good discussions and debates about elections and support for the rebellious troops. Many people said they would take our leaflets home to be reprinted and would build activities in support of these rebellious troops.

A member of a NYC AFSCME local took a stack of leaflets to distribute because she had relatives in Iraq and opposes this war, as she had the war in Vietnam. She agreed to raise a resolution of support for the soldiers in her union local. We will be in touch with her and others who shared their names and phone numbers with us. Along with generous donations for our literature, these experiences reflected the positive responses to our ideas at today's event.

People in some PL's campus organization helped us distribute CHALLENGES and leaflets. On one bus we had fruitful discussions about the Party's ideas and why



we differ with other "communist" organizations. Most on the bus agreed with much of what we said but were skeptical about whether communism will work or if the masses can be won to the ideas. A key discussion on the bus was about sexism and way to fight it on campus.

Upon leaving we heard the cops arrested one of our bus mates for protesting in a "restricted zone," standing at the Veterans Memorial while her daughter was video-taping the loss of life it symbolized. Her arrest exposed how the police attempt to intimidate protestors. Our supposed "rights" are as limited as the ruling class wants them to be. ☸

PL'er Anti-Racist Political Base Answers Union Election Red-baiting

One comrade has found recently that organizing an election campaign in basic industry is hard work. To pull it off it's necessary to rely on our base among the workers. For needed help he reached out to CHALLENGE readers among friends and co-workers and they came through. When asking workers for testimonials regarding his fitness for union office, their responses revealed a deep political understanding they had learned from the paper.

In an "endorsement flyer" distributed to 4,500 workers, rank-and-filers talked of "the struggle against racism," the "struggle to keep capitalist corporations from destroying a worker's ability to live a decent life," how we need to "unite all aerospace workers [whether they work for subcontractors or the final assemblers] against [the bosses'] attacks, which put the burden for the expanding wars on our backs." Retired, laid-off and active workers, black, Latin and white, men and women all contributed.

When our comrade displayed leadership to the workers and exposed the union hacks' lies, the latter spoke publicly about "unelected leaders" not following the leaders. According to these misleaders, the "unelected leaders" were the cause of our poor contracts.

This type of anti-communist attack shows the nature of bourgeois leadership where workers are seen as "not smart enough" to be leaders themselves. The potential of workers to lead themselves is the biggest threat to capitalism. We strive at every turn to nurture and develop that potential into a revolutionary force.

The particularly strong response from workers was an anti-racist one. Our comrade has led the anti-racist fight on the job for years and workers, black and

white, recognize and appreciate that. A retired comrade collected \$78 from African-American workers in a local "black" church based on her description of the anti-racist, anti-imperialist campaign our Party and base were running. Another Latin worker's e-mail told us the workers in his shop appreciated our exposure of the union misleaders' betrayal of farm workers during the union's campaign to bribe the company to build a plant locally. He then came to his first union meeting to shake our candidate's hand.

"It's great my white brothers and sisters are realizing that these racist attacks affect them also," said an African-American friend of the Party, when he saw that white workers, who weren't [yet!] in the Party, were writing about the need to emphasize the fight against racism in our campaign literature.

The election campaign has provided opportunities for hundreds of individual and small group discussions. We talked with workers in many buildings about the election, but many discussions quickly turned to war and racism. Although we know workers in many places, most of these political discussions involved workers we hadn't yet met.

Despite the union's attempts to separate "union business" from the real politics of the world today, the workers understand the links and are eager to discuss them, to hear a communist analysis. Compared to workers' responses in past political discussions, the difference today is inspiring. Years of hard work by comrade has yielded results — further evidence that our confidence in the working class is justified, that what you do counts. ☸

Worcester Bus Strikers Fought Boss/Union/Dems Gang-up; WELCOMED CHALLENGE

WORCESTER, MA, Oct. 17 — The workers in Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 22 struck the Worcester Regional Transportation Authority (WRTA) last summer, the only strike in central Massachusetts this year. It would set the political tone for actions by other workers.

PLP members supported the strike, bringing pizza and communist ideas to the picket lines. Initially, we were somewhat nervous but the workers welcomed us to walk their line and wanted our help in publicizing their demands. Many asked how to get a copy of CHALLENGE.

The picket line was multi-racial and international, with women and men, and young and old. One woman remembered some of our comrades from the Cristino Hernandez police-terror struggle and immediately wanted to set up a meeting.

The union wanted to maintain the existing health insurance co-pay and prevent eight jobs from being "restructured" from union to non-union status. There were no wage demands.

The local media and city bosses condemned the strike as "a selfish denial of transportation." But in reality public transportation is under-funded; the city and the WRTA bosses had their own agenda: union-busting. The bosses don't care about workers suffering under capitalism. They keep raising bus fares and cutting bus routes affecting working-class neighborhoods, especially communities of color and surrounding towns.

Many workers who use bus service were angry at the striking workers because they were stranded. However, we explained that it was in the interest of workers and students to support the strike, that the main contradiction was between the WRTA bosses and the striking workers. It was these bosses who

created — and should be blamed for — this crisis. Capitalists care only about their profit margin. This is the true nature of class society.

We pointed out that these workers were standing up for themselves and the working class as a whole. Strikes are a struggle between classes. Compared to the "lesser-of-two-evils" election farce, striking is workers' power in action.

It was inspiring to see workers intently reading CHALLENGE. Our flyers were literally snatched up. As our relationship with some workers grew, we asked them to sell CHALLENGES to their friends and invited them to PLP events. We talked about a society with workers really holding state power, about a communist society run by workers where the value produced is distributed according to need, not profits. We discussed joining PLP to make a revolution to wipe out the capitalist class. We're just at the beginning with these workers.

The class betrayal of the striking workers by the union-WRTA-politician gang-up sold out the workers. The local Democratic Congressman got the WRTA and the union to return to the table at which the union accepted all the give-backs. The workers wound up with nothing. It was a serious defeat for the entire working class.

Ultimately, winning means an end to wage slavery and this capitalist system. Right now winning means winning the hearts and minds of workers and solidifying friendships in class struggle, instilling class consciousness and stopping scabs. Class anger is still alive.

PLP continues to meet with those strikers with whom communist ideas resonated as we position ourselves for the next struggle. ☸

LETTERS



PLP Students Pump Up Teachers’ Demo

Recently I went to a local teachers’ union demonstration that denounced the fascist murders of teachers in Colombia. It was good to attend an event openly dedicated to international workers solidarity, but the protest could have been more militant.

I was the first PLP member there, and joined the picket line, which was neatly penned outside the NYC Colombian consulate. Participants marched quietly in circles, with occasional speakers who said relatively little.

Partially from my experiences this summer at the Boston Summer Project and at other protests, I knew it was my responsibility to get things pumped up. I distributed chants sheets with the Party logo; protesters took them eagerly.

I proceeded to chant at the top of my lungs. People responded well. Especially to the bilingual ones like, “La lucha obrera/ no tienen fronteras” — “The fight of the workers/ has no borders.” Teachers were also impressed by the fact that I was one of the few students there.

When other comrades arrived, we were able to give more leadership. We had a powerful presence since even our small contingent was multi-racial, reflecting the breaking of bosses’ borders. We sold CHALLENGE and “It’s-not-just-Bush-it’s-Capitalism” buttons. Our leadership with chants made people willing to listen to what we had to say. Some teachers on the picket line tried to have students speak on the bullhorn but the leadership denied their request. It would have boosted a worker-student alliance if one of the students had been allowed to speak.

This event revealed much about our ideas and how the rank and file teachers were glad to have us there.

COLLEGE COMRADE

Bogota/New York: Dreams of a Common Freedom

Up to a million people took to the streets of Colombia's major cities in a massive *jornada*, a one day-general strike and day of action. Called by the national unions, including the teachers in FECODE, it was a political strike against the Uribe government and the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., and for public health and education. It was a call to end death squad killings. It was scary and tough, but El Pais quotes Maria Rosario Nino, a 65-year-old on a three-day march into Bogotá: “Además, un docente nunca siente cansancio.” (“Oh well, a teacher never feels tired.”)

The jornada is common in Colombia, but this time, as they marched in Medellín, Cali and Bogotá, a few teachers marched in solidarity with them in New York City. FECODE had asked PSC-CUNY, the faculty-staff union at the City University of New York, to come out with them October 12. PSC picketed the Colombian consulate, with signs like “La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras!” (“Workers struggles have no borders.”)

The consulate closed early, probably because they did not want visitors to see the pickets.

Alongside PSC members marched other unionists, activists in the Killer Coke campaign, students and members of PLP. A FECODE teacher wrote to the New York union the next day: “We appreciate your connection to this *jornada* through your picket in New York, and we know the significance it has for our country.”

In Colombia the repression of teachers is extreme, but also in New York, to teach is to struggle. And according to a Mexican teacher slogan, to struggle is to teach. “*El maestro luchando también está enseñando.*” Brother to brother, teacher to teacher, sister to sister - what will their common struggle have taught? Many have dreamed and died for it. Will teachers learn from a struggle that knows no borders, how to set no limits to their history, their dreams of a free commons, of being-free-in-common, of communist freedom?

NYC TEACHER

Putting Politics First Led To PLP

Your article (CHALLENGE, 10/20) entitled “Memories From May Day 1946” was very informative. I would add one note. The article states that, “When the Cold War onslaught hit the unions, the communists were ousted rather easily....



Having...fought it with a ‘free speech’ defense,” rather than politically, but there was one (important) exception — the CP in Buffalo. Here the communists DID make a political fight; the party there was led by a group which became the kernel of those who eventually quit the CP to form the Progressive Labor Movement, the fore-runner of the PLP.

Another example of “turning a bad thing into a good thing.”

BROOKLYN OLD-TIMER

Trials and Errors of A Progressive Intellectual

On Oct. 10, Gerard Pierre Charles died of lung problems while seeking medical treatment in Cuba. He was 68, and one of Haiti’s and Latin America’s leading intel-

lectuals. He also reflected the contradictions of many progressives and leftists.

Charles was a founder of the Unified Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH), while being a trade union leader. He fought the Papa Doc Duvalier dictatorship, but had to flee to Mexico to escape the TonTon Macoute (Duvalier’s goons). He lived in Mexico until the fall of Baby Doc, who ruled after his father died. Charles became a college professor in Mexico and wrote extensively on Haiti and Latin America. He won many literary prizes and was nominated by local and Latin American intellectuals for the Nobel Peace Prize.

When Baby Doc was run out of Haiti in 1986, Charles returned to Haiti. The opportunism of PUCH caused its demise (it never actually called for a real revolution and became just another electoral party), so he joined the Lavalas movement which helped Jean Bertrand Aristide become president in the early 1990s. But the remnants of the Duvalier regime — which controlled the Army — quickly overthrew Aristide.

Several years later, Aristide returned to power with the support of U.S. troops sent by the Clinton administration. But the corruption of the government and the misery of the Haitian masses didn’t end. Gerard Pierre Charles finally split with Aristide and helped form the Organization of People in Struggle. But instead of breaking with all bourgeois forces and calling for a real revolution against capitalism, the anti-Aristide movement helped bring back the old TonTon Macoute death squads, this time supported by troops sent by Bush and Chirac of France.

Today, the Haitian workers and masses face the living hell of being ruled by death squads plus being occupied by UN troops (now led by the Brazilian Army). On top of that, hurricane-caused floods killed 3,000 (CHALLENGE, 10/20). The Haitian masses (like those worldwide) are paying for the failure to organize a revolutionary communist movement to fight all forms of capitalism. The longer we wait in doing this, the more we will suffer.

TOUSSAINT ROUGE

Letter from Pakistan

Communism is the truth so it cannot be defeated. International struggle for the new communist world will abolish exploitation, wage slavery, poverty, illiteracy, terrorism, sexism, racism, nationalism and poverty everywhere. It will create a world without bosses and borders, where everyone receives according to need.

Capitalism is threatening wars worldwide to satisfy its need to exploit workers for their profit. It will launch a world war so it is our first and foremost duty to convert this war into a communist revolution by recruiting the working class into PLP. This is the only party striving for a classless world, eliminating the savagery of capitalism.

In Pakistan, communists must fight terrorism, fundamentalism, sexism, racism and nationalism. The ruling class uses militant fundamentalism for the sake of capitalist exploitation and oppression. They used these terrorists to fight the Soviet Union on behalf of the United States. Now they’re saying they’re eliminating these terrorists from Wana (South Waziristan) and other hideouts, but they’re doing it so capitalism can survive.

Pakistan’s ruling class can’t eliminate terrorism because these well-organized

terrorists have strongholds in many places. In fact, they were originally planted by the capitalists to exploit and terrorize the people. They’ve been trained by the U.S. and other capitalist countries.

Pakistani and Indian rulers claim they will resolve all conflicts, including Kashmir, but they’re just deceiving the working class. The ruling classes of both countries practice nationalism, preventing them from resolving disputes. The rivalries among the world’s rulers provide the basis for the development of imperialism. In its drive to survive, the profit system depends upon regional wars. In Southeast Asia, capitalism maintains the Kashmir issue, impelling an arms race and the building of huge armies in order to control their exploited and poor people. We in PLP believe that such issues will help us to strengthen our Party by recruiting poor workers, peasants, soldiers and students.

LONG LIVE COMMUNISM!

PAKISTANI COMRADES

A Little Rebellion Goes A Long Way

As a group of 30 “excessed” teachers waiting to be placed in jobs, we were sitting in rows of plastic chairs seven hours a day - some of us for four weeks - in a regional headquarters of the Dept. of Education here. Three secretaries with computers were also there, some doing work relative to us. Some of us were short-term, in and out in a few hours and sent to a job or receiving needed papers.

Conditions were awful. The carpet kept coming apart because of the movement of chairs tightly pushed against each other. For a few people, it was also a “rubber room,” a holding place for people “under suspicion,” but not yet convicted, of some misdeed.

Relationships had developed among those of us sitting there for almost four weeks. Anger and voices were rising. In a factory, these signs would have led to a strike. The situation just needed a trigger.

The young secretary in charge of the room was talking to a new entrant. She turned to the teachers sitting in the rows of chairs and, in a nasty tone, told them to “be quiet.” She was obviously irritated because the background noise made it difficult to work.

The teachers were all shocked into silence. Nobody said anything. Emboldened, the secretary commanded somebody to leave the front row because long-termers should not have been in the front rows. The elderly teacher who had been sitting in the front row said, “I’m leaving,” and walked out. Still nobody said anything. The secretary became bolder. She started to discard papers left around a computer which were supposedly to be used by job-seeking teachers. Still silence.

Unable to take this disrespect any longer, I started talking in a loud and comical manner saying, “I loved to be insulted.” The secretary commanded me to be quiet. I replied, “I will not be quiet. I will talk whenever and wherever I want.” We had a short but sharp argument while all the teachers watched. Another secretary persuaded her to sit down, but she soon ran for a supervisor.

The supervisor told us that she knew of our terrible plight, how difficult it was. Finally, after I had been raising my hand for

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about seven minutes, she allowed me to talk. I said the secretaries should not be expected to work in a room with so many people forced to do nothing, confined to rows of chairs week after week. She said this was a "professional office." I responded that it was a "professional prison." Then she got very loud and nasty with me.

But then 10 other people, all "long-termers," spoke up. The supervisor was taken aback and immediately created a frenzy of activity. One person who'd been waiting four weeks for a letter received it in 10 minutes and left for her job. The woman approached me and thanked me for getting her the job, saying she would tell her family about me.

The next day, all 10 people who had spoken out were placed in jobs. One after another they thanked me for

getting them the jobs. It was quite a day.

When those I had known were mostly gone and I was trying to develop some new friends among new entrants, the supervisor approached me and said very loudly, "They're thinking of removing your license line, and you'll be here as long as it takes to get you a job."

The following work day an old friend who had been working in the same building and had heard of my plight - probably from talk around the building about the "rebellion" - placed me in a job.

Without that fight-back I'd probably still be sitting on the small, confined, plastic chair, two weeks later, and so would the 10 other people. It was a small working-class rebellion that people definitely learned from.

A COMMUNIST TEACHER

CHALLENGE NEEDS YOUR: SUGGESTIONS

Over the years Progressive Labor Party has produced three albums of revolutionary, labor and protest songs (two records and one cassette). They were sold out years ago and are no longer available. Many younger comrades and friends of PLP have never heard those recordings. Discussion has begun on the question of the Party re-issuing some, or all, of those songs in one or two CD's. One Thousand copies of one CD would probably cost \$2,000 to \$3,000 to produce.

There are a few general possible approaches. First, we can copy all of the songs onto two CD's. Second, we can copy most, but not all, of the songs onto one or two CD's. Third, we can make one "best of..." CD. Fourth, it's a bad idea so don't make any CD's.

Additionally, several of the old songs, including "The

Internationale," have been partially re-written to strengthen the politics. Should some or all of the re-written songs be recorded to replace the original versions? There are also some songs floating around the Party that haven't been recorded. Perhaps we could put them out on a CD as well. Studio recording time is more involved and more expensive.

We would like to include your ideas in the discussion before any decisions are made, before anything is burned in plastic. All suggestions should be sent to CHALLENGE PERIODICALS, Box 808, GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202, the sooner the better. Also, please send any good revolutionary songs you may have. Include the words, chords, and/or printed music, and a cassette if possible.☺

PLP Exposes 'Dream Act' Draft of Immigrant Youth At LA Marches

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 16 — Two marches took place today, one sponsored by the AFL-CIO and one by a coalition of immigrants' rights groups. Both were organized to demand driver's licenses and amnesty for immigrant workers. All told, about 2,000 people marched.

Because of infighting between the leaders, the marches failed to meet up. The first march included a few SEIU organizers, but mainly immigrant rights' groups. Leaders distributed American flags and pushed Kerry. At the second march, on Broadway downtown, there were mainly signs for driver's licenses and amnesty.

Thirty-five hundred workers eagerly took PLP leaflets and bought 700 CHALLENGES. Our leaflet exposed the "DREAM ACT" (sponsored by right-wing Senator Orin Hatch), which promises residency for undocumented youth, but requires two years military service or two years of college. Most undocumented immigrants, unable to get into college, will be forced into the army.

We cited the 19 soldiers in Iraq who refused suicide orders. They deserve our support. Kerry and the liberal press are using their refusal to demand more troops and equipment in Iraq. We demonstrated the opposite: the potential power of soldiers to oppose not merely unsafe missions but, more importantly, oppose attacking Iraqi civilians and imperialist war in general. We also showed that Kerry's health plan is supported by corporations like GM because it would save them billions.

We called on workers to organize in the shops to fight the bosses' attacks and for immigrants and citizens to unite with communist leadership, defy the bosses' fascist marching orders and turn their imperialist wars into a fight for revolution and workers' power — communism.

On Broadway, many took up our contingent's lively chants, like "Arab, Asian, Black, Latin, White; Workers of the world, Unite!" and "U.S. imperialism out of Iraq!" A group of youth marched with PLP for the first time and boldly sold CHALLENGE and distributed leaflets. Marchers and onlookers responded well to our banners calling for ending racist terror from Iraq to LA with communist revolution.☺

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

Kerry: smooth imperialist

John Kerry is committed to fundamentally the same goal as George Bush, which is a permanent U.S. strategic presence in Iraq....

The American policy community — the people in the policy institutes, think-tanks, and university institutions accustomed to man the U.S. government...share an identical vision....

They believe...America is the world's most powerful nation; its duty (and privilege) is to order and police the world.

Sen. Kerry's own electoral Web site declares that if he is elected he will "strengthen weak states and secure and rebuild failed states around the world...."

John Kerry will rescue the failed states. The war in Iraq will go on. (International Tribune, 9/29)

'Leftist' sells out Indians

...This remote stretch of the Amazon is an Indian reservation,...Yet white settlers...have built an airstrip, a fancy technical school, a town hall and stores, all protected by a new military base....

Clandestine gold and diamond mines are flourishing.... Encroachment has been accelerating and becoming bolder....

Brazil's first elected left-wing president....Mr. da Silva visited here more than a decade ago, expressed support for their plight and promised that if he ever got into power, he would grant their demand.

"Since Lula came into office, things have only gotten worse for us," said Jacir Jose de Souza, a Macuxi Indian chief.... "He's



worse than the last government because he says one thing and does another." (NYT, 10/15)

Colombia another Vietnam?

BOGOTA, Colombia, Oct. 10 — The number of American military personnel here will double, to 800, in the coming months, based on a weekend vote in the United States Congress.

The action was welcomed by President Alvaro Uribe's government for its fight against Marxist rebels but condemned by human rights monitors, who warned a sharp escalation in Colombia's conflict....could lead to a Vietnam-like quagmire....

American involvement is being ratch-

eted up as the United States steadily increases training for police and military forces in Latin America.

In 2003, American soldiers trained 22,831 Latin American troops and police officers, 52 percent more than in 2002.... (NYT, 10/11)

Teens need jobs, not jail

Boot camps and other get-tough programs for adolescents do not prevent criminal behavior, as intended, and may make the problem even worse, a new study has found.

Further, laws transferring juveniles into the adult court system lead these teenagers to commit more violence, the study said....

" 'Scare tactics' don't work," the panel concluded. "Programs that seek to prevent

violence through fear and tough treatment do not work." (NYT, 10/17)

Global profits cause slums

...The UN commissioned a 300-page report on the growth of slums. The authors found that slum dwellers account for an average 43% of the population of developing countries. In sub-saharan Africa the proportion of urban residents in slums is highest at 71.9%....

They...suggested that the greatest underlying reason for the growth of slums was laissez-faire globalization — the liberalisation and privatisation of national economies...imposed on indebted countries by the International Monetary Fund....

...Some developing countries, the authors suggested, would have done better to stay out of the globalisation process altogether if they had the interest of their own people in mind. (GW, 9/23)

US fights to colonize Iraq

...Rigged elections [are] designed to leave Iraq in the hands of Ayad Allawi and his CIA/Mukhabarat-trained thugs, dependent on Washington for both money and might.

This is why Sadr is being hunted — not because he is a threat to women's rights but because his political demands represent the greatest threat to US control.... In the hands of the majority, US military bases will be in jeopardy, as will Bremer's privatisation-friendly laws. (GW, 10/01)

Media Serve Bosses' State Power

The New York Times' Oct. 17 endorsement of Kerry for president was an exercise of state power. The state includes all the means by which capitalists conduct their class dictatorship, not just the formal apparatus of government. In organizing opinion for fascism and war, the media are indispensable tools for the rulers. The biggest outlets have the closest ties to the nation's leading financiers and imperialist policy makers.

The Times, the most influential of the rulers' print media, is tightly linked to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), whose sponsors include J.P. Morgan Chase, Exxon Mobil, and the Rockefeller family. The CFR clamored loud and long for "regime change" in Iraq. Times' editorials mirrored the CFR both in demanding a massive U.S. invasion aided by UN allies and in chiding Bush for the bungled occupation. Arthur Sulzberger, Times publisher, belongs to the CFR. Its last president, Leslie Gelb, edited the Times' editorial page. Bernard Gwertzman, formerly the Times' top foreign affairs writer, now runs the CFR's website. And on the eve of the Iraq war (2/11/03), the Times boasted that it had "partnered with the Council on Foreign Relations to provide content from cfr.org, the Coun-

cil's Web site, as well as articles from its 'Foreign Affairs' publication."

As U.S. rulers need public support for widening imperialist ventures, media giants are coming increasingly under direct control of the foreign policy establishment. William Mitchell, a former senator and Clinton Middle East envoy, is chairman of Disney, which owns ABC. Viacom recently elected to its board Joseph Califano and William Cohen. The former advised President Lyndon Johnson on repressing anti-Vietnam War protests. The latter, as Clinton's Defense Secretary, directed the murderous bombardment of Serbia. So it's no accident that three best-selling books critical of Bush's mis-handling of the war, including Bob Woodward's "Plan of Attack," have come from Viacom's Simon & Schuster. Viacom also owns CBS, where Dan Rather has been clumsily trying to discredit Bush's National Guard record.

NBC belongs to General Electric, a major weapons supplier to the U.S. war machine. Sam Nunn, once head of the Senate Armed Services Committee, sits on GE's board. Exxon Mobil pumps vast amounts of cash into PBS. Its Anglophile programming helps foster the U.S. alliance with Britain. Time Warner's CEO

is Richard Parsons, a Nelson Rockefeller protégé.

Movies, too, are an instrument of the capitalists' power. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), representing Hollywood studios, has a two-way dialogue with Washington. It lobbies for the industry and, at the same time, takes direction from the rulers. Shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, MPAA head Jack Valenti had a meeting with Bush administration officials. He agreed to tell his members not to make films that portray Arabs as bad guys. The rulers feared that an anti-U.S. backlash in the Arab world, especially in Saudi Arabia, might jeopardize their oil empire and planned invasion of Iraq. Dan Glickman, the current MPAA chief, is a former Clinton cabinet member who most recently worked for Akin Gump, Exxon Mobil's

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The mainstream media claim to be objective. But their "truth" is rooted in the imperialists' need to put the U.S. on a war footing ideologically. Capitalist state power takes many forms: the Oval Office, the halls of Congress, the urban police precincts, the foundations and universities, the pages of the New York Times, the silver screen or the boob tube. None of them is class-neutral. We must smash them all.

(Next: *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the State and the Party.*)

'What's good for GM is lousy for auto workers'

Workers at Opel (GM's affiliate in Germany) have been staging work stoppages protesting elimination of 10,000 jobs in Germany and 2,000 in the rest of Europe. Workers' banners attacked both the bosses and the IG Metall union hacks for "selling them out." On Oct. 18,



walkouts occurred in Britain, Belgium and Poland. International solidarity emerged the next day as 50,000 workers protested the cuts at 13 GM facilities throughout Europe; 10,000 marched in Bochum supporting that plant's Opel workers.

GM's motto in the U.S. used to be, "What's good for GM is good for the country." Well, the problems of GM and the auto industry in general signal crises in the capitalist economies of the USA and Europe, for which workers are being forced to pay.

Brazil's auto workers are also fighting back. In the ABC region of Sao Paulo, center of the auto industry, 40,000 metal and auto workers struck demanding higher wages and an earlier contract negotiation. Bank and oil workers have also struck there recently.

Workers are breaking with the illusion that Lula, the former auto/metal workers' union leader and now President of Brazil, is "their man in power." Lula's Labor Party recently lost votes in the Sao Paulo industrial belt and in another one of his strongholds, Porto Alegre, where the reformist World Social Forums are held each year. The Lula government's privatizations and social service cutbacks have shown workers that he's just another boss.

The world capitalist system's endless wars and crises impel its increased attacks on all workers. The best lesson workers can learn from their strikes and struggles is to turn them into a school to forge communist leaders capable of fighting for a world without any bosses. That's PLP's goal.

Film Review: The Motorcycle Diaries

The Road to Political Consciousness via Motorcycle

The inherent contradictions of capitalism became obvious to Ernesto "Che" Guevara when he toured South America for seven months on a motorcycle with his friend Alberto Granado. This adventure is chronicled in the movie, *The Motorcycle Diaries*, based on Guevara's journals as well as Granado's account of the events.

Diaries takes place seven years before Ché would be radicalized and help lead the 1959 uprising that ousted the Cuban dictator Batista. Only 24 and born into a well-to-do family, Che led a privileged life in Argentina and was about to become a doctor. Before settling into this profession and into the petit-bourgeoisie, he and his good friend take off on a motorcycle to explore the continent.

The scenery is beautifully filmed throughout Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia and finally Venezuela. This movie could have been just a story of two young men's adventures of partying, meeting young women, scamming people for food and for repairs to their motorcycle and living independently. However, the injustices of class society become apparent in Peru when they see the racist treatment of the indigenous migrant workers along the roads of Cuzco, Machu Picchu and Lima. At one point, they meet two migrant coal miners who are on the run and looking for work clandestinely because they're communists. They ask Che and Alberto why they're traveling. Che answers, humbly, "We are traveling, just to travel," realizing that the two workers are traveling to survive. Later they witness the disgusting hiring practice at the coal factory, which so angers Che that he confronts the boss. The latter threatens to jail them since they're on the factory's property.

Che's political consciousness develops when they help a leper colony. Ché's refusal to wear gloves — knowing fully that leprosy is not contagious when it is treated — wins many of the patients and doctors to the idea that these people may have a disease but are still human and should be treated as such, not separated from "healthy" humans. They even confront strict church nuns who refuse to feed anyone in the main mess hall unless they go to church. At one point, a nun refuses to feed Che and Alberto because they haven't attended church. In solidarity, the patients later



bring the two of them food.

Motorcycle Diaries illustrates several aspects of developing class-consciousness and the idea that we can change the world. On the question of violent revolution, the film takes us through the ruins of the Incas in Machu Picchu. Alberto, romanticizing the ancient city, tells Ché he would like to marry an Incan woman and then organize the indigenous people to elect an Incan President. Che tells him you cannot have a "revolution without guns" since that's how the Spaniards defeated the Incas.

Che's relationship with the people he met led them to respect him because of his honesty and humanity. He refused separation from the sick or the indigenous. By the end of the movie, Che is reconsidering his life because of all he has seen.

Che has become an iconic figure around the world for better and worse (the bosses use Che's image to sell T-shirts, hats and even beer!). Guevara's humanity and bravery were admirable but from a revolutionary perspective, he had many weaknesses. He didn't believe in the necessity of a communist party. His idea ("Foco") maintained that only a few trained and committed guerrillas were needed to make a revolution. However, to make a real revolution, communists must build a mass base in the working class for communist ideas as they engage in class struggle against the bosses.